

Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities

Transportation Working Group

Virtual Collaborative Roundtable

Thursday, 14 October 2021, 1 – 3 pm

AGENDA

1. Welcome, Introductions and Land Acknowledgement

Received

2. Opening Comments

- Fred Eisenberger, Mayor (video)

Received

- Maureen Cosyn Heath, Director of Transit
 - Customer focused system, accessible
 - HSR primarily contractor DARTS
 - To meet all customers' unique needs
 - Must continue to innovate
 - Staff in process of consulting
 - Conventional and specialized travel needed to better meet needs of customers
 - Transportation vital, HSR will continue to strive to meet needs of customers

3. Panel Discussion

- Mark Mindorff, Executive Director, DARTS Transit
 - Rides provided pre-pandemic 844,000+
 - Large number of users are Seniors
 - Large numbers drop off due to COVID-19
 - Recovery to 1300 passengers per day
 - Will they come back?
 - Office staff, call center still working from home

- Michelle Martin, Manager, Accessible Transportation Services
 - 2 types of service
 - Conventional (regular) service provided by HSR
 - Specialized (door-to-door) service provided by ATS contracted out to DARTS
 - HSR's a 7-point plan for safety on transit:
 - Listen and follow advice of health care experts
 - Require masks on buses
 - Frequent thorough cleaning
 - Monitor crowding with real-time products
 - Touchless payment
 - Keep staff safe
 - Protect the future of transit the (Re)envision Guiding Principles
 - Connect, Innovate, Evolve
 - Engage with employees

- Make positive impact on community, environment, and economy
- Deliver on promise
- Honour equity, diversity, and inclusion
- Customer experience is at the heart of what's done
- HSR and ATS will soon return to 100% seated capacity
- Bylaw 20-155: Face masks must continue to be worn
- Upper James Customer Service closed
- Hunter Street Hamilton Go open
- Current COVID adjustments on DARTS
 - Vehicle capacity limits increase to up to 2 unrelated, vaccinated, and masked individuals
 - Clients not wearing masks travel in isolation vehicles
- July 2020, Council approved PRESTO fare system and approved the removal of paper fare media
- Fully implemented by Fall 2020
- July 2021, PRESTO implemented on DARTS
 - Mail-in options for eligible Golden Age pass living in Long Term Care facilities
- PRESTO e-tickets accepted on HSR and DARTS
 - Downloadable from the App Store and Google Play
- HRS pilot projects
 - The Bus Stop Seat pilot: HSR employee initiative. Potential seating solution for existing HSR stops.

Consulted ACPD – Transportation Working Group for feedback

- Waterdown On-Demand pilot: HSR route 18
Waterdown is on-demand service through myRide app. Real time stops and up to 48-hour advance booking. 80 new virtual stops and 71 existing bus stops.
 - ATS retained Dylan consulting to review the key auditor recommendations
 - Evaluate and redesign the eligibility assessment process
 - Create standard operating procedures and guidelines
 - Assess need for experienced eligibility determinations
 - Feasibility, potential savings, costs and benefits of expanded taxi scrip program
 - Create performance metrics to measure process efficiencies
 - Investigating service of options to create a sustainable family of services
 - Annual Accessibility Information event on 24 Nov 2021
 - michelle.martin@hamilton.ca or 905 527 4441 for information, questions, and feedback
 - 905 529 1212 for ATS
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- Ron VanKleef, President, Hamilton Cab

- Prior to covid: 24/7 service with 225 taxis
 - During Covid: 145 taxis
 - 18 – 20 wheelchair accessible vehicles
 - Attempting to overcome hurdles to grow number
 - Fuel costs is a major hurdle
 - Taxi incentive program
 - Flat fee \$5 paid to drivers by the city
 - Stopped beginning of pandemic
 - Restarted July 2021
 - Deals with Hospitals, Schools, Daycares, Good Sheppard, DARTS, taxi scrips etc. as service provider
 - Taxi is a brokerage
 - Many methods of payment with about 76% automation to keep up with customers and times
 - Work with police service, etc. to optimize GPS, safety, integration
 - Taxi plates not owned by Hamilton Cab
 - Approximately 470 plates
 - How to get drivers into Hamilton Cab?
 - Looks forward to providing input
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- Anthony Rizzuto, President, Blue Line
 - Brokerage and dispatch service
 - Accessibility
 - 22 pre-covid, 11 covid accessible drivers
 - Some lose due to illness

- More interaction to assist users, in close proximity to passenger, potential factor to lose of numbers
- No remuneration available, to be addressed
 - Drivers took on own incentives
 - Drivers created own network of passengers
 - Loses were company incentives as a result
- Disaster, city needs to get back to help out industry
 - Training
 - Incentive program
 - Ride share to become accessible. Currently pays to not be accessible.
- Need assistance to get back into shape, stop letting customers down.

4. Q & A Session – 30 - 45 min

Anthony Frisina: Taxicab services, in regard to booking accessibility, is there a priority for those with accessibility, or is it streamlined?

Anthony Rizzuto: It is priority 1. Anyone who needs accessible vehicles jump to next in line.

Ron Vankleef: Accessible booking typically pre-ordered, dispatcher doesn't promise to pick up because no guarantee to have a vehicle for that specific time and place.

Anthony Frisina: When a passenger calls, can a taxicab designate a specific location and time?

Ron Vankleef: Yes, that's correct

Anthony Frisina: (summary) Why can't DARTS do this?

Mark Mindorf: Specific pick-up and drop-off designated by property owners

Anthony Frisina: Can't be negotiated?

Mark Mindorf: Cut off for time management

James Kemp: How to improve Cab Driver morale?

Anthony Rizzuto: make accessibility mandatory part of initial training

James Kemp: What would you consider fair to make accessibility mandatory?

Anthony Rizzuto: 15-18000 in addition per year. 20000 to enforce ride share following by-laws. Quarter million or provide service.

Dina Honig (Immigration and Refugee Advisory Committee): Presto card computer literacy. Is there a service to teach

presto card computer literacy? (Orientation to the uses of cards)

Michelle Martin: Visit customer care center at Hunter Street Go Station or call to access over-the-phone for non-English speaker available via City staff. Also, through Shoppers Drug Mart.

Dina Honig: Presto as only payment?

Michelle Martin: Correct

Mark McNeil: Do you allow wheelchair users to bypass the queue?

Answer: Correct

Jeanne Mayo (Senior's Advisory Committee): Hamilton 2nd largest footprint as municipality. Toronto miniscule comparatively. Rural members paid higher fee to be driven to specific store. \$40 of taxi scrip isn't enough. Can we all look at this problem as a group?

Brue Craig (DARTS Board Member): There needs to be more incentive for companies. How much money is the city prepared to subsidize the taxi scrip program or other companies?

Michelle Martin: Licensing of Taxis, another shared ride service fall under city jurisdiction. Not connected to HSR. It should be directed to municipal law.

Brue Craig: You're telling us "Go tell someone else?"

Michelle Martin: We oversee Transit

Brue Craig: Is this not part of Transit?

Michelle Martin: This is a part of Transit but not under our umbrella. We provide input where appropriate

Jake Maurice: Posting of fare increases. Are there any plans to make it better?

Jay Adams (HSR): Print form, digital channels for fare increase. Scheduled for more investments. This year is a bit late. We will make improvements in the future.

Lance Dingman: Mental health advocate. Asking for assistance for affordable transit, funding wise?

Jay Adams: ReInvision. Look at network to support growing city, public engagement. Looking to enable access to services. Action plans for affordability and affordable pass service. Understands that people have been hit especially hard by pandemic. Currently, 8

trips+ per week then 9th trip onwards it's free, Children under 5 travels for free. Ongoing collaborations with Hamilton food-share services.

James Kemp: Mandatory presto program, \$6 presto program. Any work done for forgiveness of non-payment for low-income family.

Jay Adams: Yes. We are studying different issues, will add this for further exploration to make informed decision. Register card to protect fee in event of loss. Nothing for replacement card value.

Michelle Martin: Special purpose ticket for community organizations available that may work in this case.

Autumn: Presto, not everyone is computer-savvy to realize money has run out once on the bus. People with disability walking home. Is there something that can be done about this?

Jay Adams: Presto executive continue to implement features, will push to advocate for new features. Have improved and will continue to improve. This shows that we need to communicate with members for how to pay. I take your point and appreciate input.

Michelle Martin: Shoppers and Fortinos can check for balance but it is extra work

Anthony Frisina: What kind of agreement is this? Why does taxi have fee for certain drop offs unlike DARTS?

Mark Mindorf: There is an agreement between our company. Told not to drop passengers off at certain locations.

Michelle Martin: Taxi script coupon available to everyone

Mark McNeil: Presto, is face-to-face available for filling up presto card?

Jay Adams: Some city Municipal Office but others not available

Paula Kilburn: When DARTS didn't qualify but qualified for Taxi Script. Will Taxi Script be lost for those people?

Michelle Martin: Staff looking at what we think is appropriate for everyone's access. Any new kind of application is going to take into account individuals who need ambulatory services. Non-ambulatory typically not eligible for taxi-script. We will make sure people are getting the transportation they need.

Anthony Frisina: DARTS calling service says during busy times. DARTS is influencing members to call outside of busy (8:00-10:00) rather than increasing staff during those times.

Michelle Martin: Other agencies do this as well. If it can wait, call at other times to balance everyone's needs.

Mark Mindorf: The contrast is sharp which is why that comment is there.

Paula Kilburn: Comment is also there because cell phone users may not have the time. Call back option available as well.

Tim Nolan: Call center script includes 'are you using your electric chair?' Can this be changed to Power Chair? Language is important.

Mark Mindorf: We will make note to update the script for our call center.

Anthony Frisina: Sometimes, powerchair isn't always used.

5. Adjournment by Shahan Aaron at 2:59 pm